

Congressman Jo Bonner, R-Alabama has introduced the “Strengthening Our Share (S.O.S.) Act” in the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill would ensure that Gulf states, which share in Gulf of Mexico federal oil and gas lease revenues, begin to receive expedited payments in order to reduce the impact of future oil spill risks to Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi and Texas coastal areas.

“I’ve introduced legislation to speed up the payment of the 2006 Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act oil and gas drilling royalties to the Gulf states and also apply them to all Gulf oil and gas wells rather than just new ones,” Rep. Bonner said.

“Alabama and other Gulf oil drilling states need this money now to help offset the negative impact of the spill as well as to pay for response efforts and to limit potential damage from future oil spills.

“The oil spill dramatically demonstrated how oil producing Gulf states, like Alabama, can be directly affected by a rupture at any of the thousands of offshore wells. Even as the Gulf of Mexico accounts for nearly 1/4 of the nation’s total oil production, Gulf states, which are home to such oil production, are forced to shoulder significant risk without adequate resources,” Rep. Bonner said.

In 2006, Congress passed the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act, setting aside 37.5 percent of royalties from new Gulf oil and natural gas drilling leases for Gulf oil producing states - Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. Unfortunately, under the law, the bulk of the royalty payments don't begin until 2017, and only include leases entered into after 2006.

“As long as our state is on the front lines of America’s vital energy production, Alabama, and the other oil producing Gulf states, must be appropriately compensated,” Rep. Bonner added.